

vital to returning dignity to their lives.

In July, this House passed an amendment to allow U.S. pharmacists to buy medications at the same low prices paid for in other countries, 20 to 50 percent less for the same drugs, and then we could pass those savings on to our seniors. It makes sense.

But last week in the dead of night the Republican leadership twisted this amendment into a deal full of loopholes so big that they could drive a truck through them.

The deal does nothing for seniors. It only protects the pharmaceutical industry profits. This compromise artificially restricts access to safe and affordable drugs abroad. It gives the drug industry a veto over all imports.

Our seniors deserve better. They deserve the same medications at the same prices that people are paying for overseas. It is time for the Republican leadership to stop using empty rhetoric. We should have a pharmaceutical plan that works. We ought to have a prescription drug benefit through Medicare.

If there must be reimportation, then in fact let us be able to reimport those drugs at a price our seniors can pay for.

WELCOME TO NEWBORN JACK CHRISTOPHER LINDGREN

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment this morning to welcome into this world Jack Christopher Lindgren, who was born just a couple of weeks ago, on September 21.

I want to congratulate his proud parents, Gary Lindgren, chief of staff in my office, and his lovely wife, Susan. I know they are delighted with their handsome baby boy.

There is some good news for little Jack. Thanks to a Republican Congress, his parents will enjoy a \$500 tax credit for their new child. That will help buy diapers and baby food and some of the clothing that babies seem to grow out of in a couple of weeks.

But here is a dose of reality for young Jack. Because of the steadfast opposition of the Clinton-Gore administration, Jack's parents will be paying a penalty again this year to the Internal Revenue Service.

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Their offense? They chose to be married. When Congress tried to correct that inequity in the Tax Code this year, President Clinton said no. There is hope for all of those American families who work hard every day to pay their taxes and support their families. They will have a chance to reduce their tax burden by saying good-bye to the Clinton-Gore team.

Mr. Speaker, American working families deserve a break. Let us give it to them.

DRUG IMPORT PROVISIONS OF AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, sometimes I wonder whether the Republican leadership of this Congress reports to the public or to the prescription drug industry. The public sends a clear message that they are sick of unjustifiably high and blatantly discriminatory prescription drug prices.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable to overwhelming prescription drug expenses. Democrats offer a proposal featuring an optional Medicare drug benefit, drug prices discounted to reflect a collective bargaining power of 39 million Medicare beneficiaries, and a strategy for undercutting international price discrimination, the ability to reimport prescription drugs.

Republicans refuse to even consider price discounts for seniors, they emasculate the reimportation proposal, and then they sunset those weak provisions before they even have a chance to kick in.

A phony watered-down drug reimportation bill is marginally better than no bill at all, but I do not want a single American to be fooled into thinking that Republican leadership has been responsive to the prescription drug crisis. The only constituency they have been responsive to is the prescription drug industry.

DATABASE PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Mr. COBLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, this will now be the third Congress in which legislation protecting databases has failed to become law. Over the past years, the opponents of such legislation have done all they can to prevent legislation from moving forward and maintain the status quo so they may pirate the work of others due to the current gap in protection. They first claimed there was no need for legislation. Then subsequently, they admitted there was, in fact, a need as long as they could get a carve-out for themselves.

How selfishly convenient. This issue will not go away. Now, more than ever, America's database producers need sufficient protection to ensure the continued investment in developing these information products. Their vulnerability remains as the pirates still sail without fear.

Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can next session to finally

pass legislation which benefits database producers and, therefore, benefits American consumers. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to express thanks to the many people who worked tirelessly to promote this legislation.

VOTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, Monday evening I spoke to a college government class in my community, and a young woman commented during the question period. She asked, I just turned 18, I will be voting for the first time, can you tell me why I should vote? What difference does the government make in my life?

I gave her two quick examples, and I thought everyone listening to this might be interested in these examples. I said, first of all that, when I was elected in 1994, we had deficits of \$300 billion per year. The Republicans took over. We now have a surplus of over \$100 billion per year. That is a \$400 billion per year difference, and that computes to \$2,200 for every single taxpayer in this Nation. That does make a difference to you. You should vote this year.

The second example I gave is that the interest on the debt is going to cost her \$185,000 during her lifetime, even if we do not add another cent to the debt. This is equivalent to the cost of a nice house in my district. It does make a difference who is in control; we have started to pay off the debt. It does make a difference, and people should vote accordingly. I am very proud of what we have accomplished, and how we have put money back in the hands of the people, including this young 18-year-old lady. I hope that she does vote, and I hope that she does vote for the good of this country.

URGING OSHA TO STOP CORRUPT ERGONOMICS RULE-MAKING

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, just when we thought the Clinton-Gore administration could not sink any lower, they always figure out another way. I recently learned that OSHA paid for 35 posthearing comments for the record on its proposed ergonomics rule. In effect, OSHA bureaucrats paid for what they wanted the public to hear and did not allow real public comments to stand. To make matters worse, OSHA paid for these comments with taxpayers dollars.

This disregard for the mandated public comment period tells a story of the Clinton-Gore-AFL-CIO Labor Department. Mr. Speaker, this outrage bears